

III. REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-6, 8-10, 14-17 and 20 remain pending in this application. Applicants do not acquiesce in the correctness of the rejections and reserve the right to present specific arguments regarding any rejected claims not specifically addressed. Further, Applicants reserve the right to pursue the full scope of the subject matter of the original claims in a subsequent patent application that claims priority to the instant application. Reconsideration in view of the following remarks is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1, 4-6, 8-10, 14-17 and 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over El-Gazzar et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 7,184,160) in view of McCormick et. al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,421,709), and further in view of Shimura et al. (U.S. Publ. No. 2004/0105689). Applicants submit that the claimed invention is allowable for the reasons that follow.

With respect to independent claims 1, 9, and 17, Applicants respectfully submit that El-Gazzar is not available as a reference against the claimed invention. El-Gazzar constitutes prior art only under 35 U.S.C. §102(e). With this response, Applicants submit a Declaration under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131, swearing that the present invention was conceived of prior to August 8, 2003, the filing date of El-Gazzar. Applicants further swear that following conception, they diligently and actively assisted in planning, preparing, reviewing, and filing the instant application. Therefore, the claimed invention antedates El-Gazzar. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) be withdrawn.

With respect to dependent claims 4-6, 8, 10, 14-16, and 20, Applicants respectfully submit that these claims are allowable for reasons stated above relative to independent claims 1,

9, and 17, as well as for their own additional claimed subject matter. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Office withdraw the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) to dependent claims 4-6, 8, 10, 14-16, and 20.

IV. CONCLUSION

In light of the above, Applicant respectfully submits that all claims are in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner require anything further to place the application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's undersigned representative at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

/Jayme M. Torelli/

Jayme M. Torelli
Reg. No.: 62,735

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Hoffman Warnick LLC
75 State Street, 14th Floor
Albany, New York 12207
(518) 449-0044
(518) 449-0047 (fax)